

DFAS overpays 53,000 Soldiers in January

by Eric W. Cramer

WASHINGTON (Army News Service, Jan. 12, 2005) -- Soldiers who see an extra few hundred dollars in their mid-month January paychecks shouldn't spend it.

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service made an error that will cause about 53,000 Soldiers to be paid too much in January. The Army will collect the funds from end-of-month paychecks to restore financial balance.

Most of the affected Soldiers will receive overpayments of between \$200 and \$300. There are 316 Soldiers who will receive overpayments of more than \$500, a DFAS official said.

When the Army "draws back" the overpayments, it will take back the overpayments of \$500 and more in two installments, officials said, to reduce any potential hardship for Soldiers.

Those who received less than \$500 extra will see the drawback in the January end of the month paycheck, Col. Kenneth Crowder, director of Army Pay Operations for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service, said those affected are Soldiers who have Army meal cards, but who are authorized for reimbursement for some meals.

Crowder said an incorrect date entered into a computer database caused the error.

He said DFAS was changing to the new rate for meal reimbursements, when a data entry error backdated the change to 2004.

"It (the computer system) tried to apply the new rate to the entire previous year," Crowder said.

He said DFAS is notifying the affected Soldiers via their Army Knowledge Online accounts and through their chains of command.

"Every Soldier involved will receive a specific, personal e-mail explaining what occurred and what the corrective actions are," Crowder said.